CLAIMS

1.   A method of determining, from transform coded data, the number
of bits required to represent an output value which would be obtained as a result
of an inverse transform being performed on said transform coded data, said
method comprising the steps of obtaining a sum of coefficient values within said
transform coded data (204) and comparing this sum to a pre-determined
threshold value (206).

2.   A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said transform coded
data is discrete cosine transform (DCT) coded data

3.   A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein said
transform coded data is MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 encoded video data.

4.   A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein said
method is used to determine whether said output values can be represented in
eight bits, or require nine bit representation.

5.   A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein said
method includes the further step of: deciding as a consequence of said
comparison which inverse transform implementation, out of a number of pre-
determined implementations, should be performed when decoding said
transform coded data (208,210).

6.   A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein at least one of said
inverse transform implementations includes instructions for handling of multiple
eight bit values in longer words.

7.   A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the
coefficient values are bi-polar, and said sum is of the absolute values of the
coefficients.

8.   A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the transform coded data consists of an 8x8 discrete cosine transform.

9.   A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein said pre-determined threshold value is in the range 500 to 530.

10.   Apparatus for determining, from transform coded data, the number of bits required to represent an output value which would be obtained as a result of an inverse transform being performed on said transform coded data, said apparatus comprising means for obtaining a sum of coefficient values within said transform coded data and means for comparing this sum to a pre-determined threshold value.

11.   Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said transform coded data is discrete cosine transform (DCT) coded data.

12.   Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 or 11 wherein said transform coded data is MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 encoded video data.

13.   Apparatus as claimed in any of claims 10 to 12 wherein said apparatus is suitable for to determining whether said output values can be represented in eight bits, or require nine bit representation.

14.   Apparatus as claimed in any of claims 10 to 13 wherein there is further provided means for deciding as a consequence of said comparison which inverse transform implementation, out of a number of pre-determined implementations, should be performed when decoding said transform coded data.

15.   Apparatus as claimed in claim 14 wherein at least one of said inverse transform implementations includes instructions for handling of multiple eight bit values in longer words.

16.   Apparatus as claimed in any of claims 10 to 15 wherein the coefficient values are bi-polar, and said sum is of the absolute values of the coefficients.

17.   Apparatus as claimed in any of claims 10 to 16 wherein the transform coded data consists of an 8x8 discrete cosine transform.

18.   Apparatus as claimed in claim 17 wherein said pre-determined threshold value is in the range 500 to 530.

19.   A record carrier wherein are recorded program instructions for causing a programmable processor to perform the steps of the method as claimed in claims 1 -9 or to implement an apparatus having the features claimed in any of claims 10 to 18.